

**Summary of the
NELAC Board of Directors/Committee Chairs Meeting
April 2, 1999**

The Board of Directors and Committee Chairs of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference convened by teleconference at 1:30 p.m. on April 2, 1999. The meeting was led by the Board chair, Dr. Ken Jackson. The action items are shown in Attachment A, incomplete action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment B and the list of participants are shown in Attachment C.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the February 25, 1999 teleconference were approved and the action items from the last meeting and past meetings were reviewed for completeness.

ELAB Issues

Ms. Mourrain identified the ELAB issues that the Board needs to address.

- S Recommendation 2B:** ELAB recommends to EMMC and the NELAC Board of Directors, regarding proficiency testing, that the goal of the NELAC PT program should be to provide full-volume, real-world samples, keeping in mind considerations of practicality and cost. *Action:* Ms. Mourrain reported that this issue will remain open until more experience is gained under the NIST program.

- S Recommendation 3:** ELAB will recommend to the NELAC Board of Directors that the Program Policy and Structure Committee address the issue of how to recognize an appropriate role for Native American Tribal nations in NELAC. *Action:* The Board is acting on this issue.

- S Recommendation 4:** With regard to the role of private-sector accrediting bodies in NELAC, ELAB will recommend to the NELAC Board of Directors that the NELAC national database include publicly available information describing the functions performed by individual private organizations for specific State programs. *Action:* The Board is acting on this. It was suggested that the National Data Base Committee also look at this issue.

- S Recommendation 5A:** ELAB recommends to the EMMC and the NELAC Board of Directors that USEPA's programs and regions and the States work to implement PBMS consistently. *Action:* The Board will act on this recommendation but EPA has the primary responsibility. Awaiting action from EMMC.

- S Recommendation 5B:** ELAB recommends to the EMMC and the NELAC Board

of Directors that training in implementation of PBMS is needed for State laboratory inspectors. *Action:* EPA has the primary responsibility. Awaiting action by EMMC.

- S Recommendation 40:** ELAB recommends to NELAC that a) the NELAC standards become effective and enforceable one year after adoption, and b) that the first group of laboratories to be accredited under NELAC standards, the 1999 standards be used for compliance and that the related timelines for acceptance of applications be adjusted accordingly. *Action:* A policy on item a has been issued by NELAC and Board has concurred with part b).
- S Recommendation 19:** ELAB recommends to NELAC that Chapter 6 be further defined regarding accrediting authority recognition of States to address the conflict of interest between public and private section labs, with respect to a State laboratory conducting routine environmental testing analyses. Further definition will include the specific guidance to avoid conflict of interest for an above stated Accrediting Authority. *Action:* The AA committee has decided not to change the guidelines at the present time.

Committee Issues

Dr. Kircher, Regulatory Coordination Committee, announced that after responding to an inquiry from Paul Mills, American Society for Quality, that he has been appointed Subcommittee Chair of the Analytical Laboratory Technical Committee. This subcommittee deals with NELAC and PBMS.

Ms. Marge Prevost discussed the issue of certification of mobile laboratories that the Accreditation Process committee is dealing with.

Ms. Mourrain mentioned the ELAB Recommendation 35 - ELAB recommends that NELAC reach out to laboratory associations through its web page by providing relevant links and sample standard operating procedures, case histories, sample quality manuals, and work sheets to assist small laboratories. She suggested that the Chairs need to be thinking about this issue.

Mr. Wayne Davis, On-site Assessment Committee, indicated that the committee has received concerns regarding accreditation based on the 1999 standards. He stated that the committee was concerned about Chapter 5. Dr. Jackson indicated that very little criticism was received at the Interim Meeting concerning accreditation based on the 1999 standards but Ms. Silkie Labie stated that there was concern from some of the states that the standards have become too relaxed.

Ms. Mourrain asked if methods need to put in the database. Mr. Matt Caruso, Chair of the National Database committee responded that this had been discussed and would be in the database.

Dr. Bart Simmons reminded the Board that a standing committee on Field Activities was being proposed and the ad hoc committee wanted to see if there were any outstanding issues regarding the creation of the committee. Ms. Mourrain stated that the Board owed them an answer regarding the report on the sampling issue. ELAB has responded to the committee stating that it needs more study. The ad hoc committee is putting together information regarding problems related to sampling for compliance and the summary will be available at their meeting at NELAC V.

AARB - additional PT oversight activities

Mr. Matt Caruso, Proficiency Testing Committee, stated that there is a problem when a PT provider has a bad sample. The committee feels that there should be a mechanism to stop the clock for the accrediting authority by bringing the issue to the Executive Secretary or the AARB. The Board suggested that Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 should be revised.

Letter to Peter Robertson

Dr. Jackson reported that the states are expressing concern regarding the proposal by EMMC to continue support for 2-3 years but to transfer the responsibility to the states in the future. He discussed a letter that was sent to Peter Robertson, Acting Deputy Administrator, EPA, from the Board requesting a meeting with him to express their concerns.

NELAC V Update

The brochure is being prepared and will be mailed shortly. The advance registration fee will be \$125.00 and will be \$150.00 if a person registers at the door. Mr. Peter Robertson, Acting Deputy Administrator, EPA has been asked to give the opening Plenary talk and Governor George Pataki of New York has also been invited to speak to NELAC.

The Interim meeting will be December 14, 15 & 16 with the ELAB meeting being held on December 17th in the J.S. Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC across from the Ronald Regan Building.

NACLA

Ms. Dutrow reported that Dr. Belinda Collins of NIST is interested in having a liaison relationship with NELAC. NACLA will be expanding to the federal government and having better federal participation.

DOD Comments

Dr. Jackson pointed out that the official comments have been received from DOD as well as more comments from the VA laboratories. These have been sent to the committee chairs to be addressed before the Annual meeting.

Action Items
Board of Directors Teleconference
April 2, 1999

Item No.	Action	Status
1.	Ms. Mourrain is to put the ELAB issues that need to be addressed by the Board on the next meeting agenda.	Completed
2.	Ms. Mourrain will ask the National Database Committee to address ELAB Recommendation No. 4.	On-going
3.	A memo will be sent to remind the Committee Chairs that new members and Chairs need to be re-elected.	Completed
4.	Mr. Anderson will send the Accrediting Authorities' response concerning ELAB Recommendation 19 to Dr. Jackson.	On-going
5.	Ms. Dutrow will expand on the comments from ELAB and the responses from the committees should be sent to her and she will submit them to Dr. Jackson for his response back to ELAB before the Annual Meeting.	On-going

Incomplete Action Items from Past Teleconferences

Date of Teleconference	Action	Status
01/11/99	Committee Chairs are to prepare "Frequently Asked Questions" for posting on the website. They are to submit these to Dr. Irene Ronning.	On-going
01/07/99	Ms. Mourrain, Ms. Dutrow and Mr. Slayton will develop a policy on handling of comments and, also, will develop a standardized letter.	On-going
11/19/98	Ms. Dutrow is to check on the status of the response for OW to the Federal Register Notice on PT.	Added to action item list for discussion with AA - Completed
11/19/98	Dr. Jackson will prepare a generic letter to be sent with the application package regarding small laboratories.	Completed
11/19/98	Ms. Betsy Dutrow will make a note to invite someone from the Interagency Task Force Methods Comparability Board to make a presentation at the Annual meeting in Saratoga Springs.	On-going
02/04/99	Ms. Mourrain, Ms. Batterton, Ms. Sample and Dr. Hartwig will work on developing a training program for the Committee Chairs.	On-going
02/25/99	The Board agreed to prepare a cost benefit analysis and background document showing the consequences of EPA's not supporting NELAC.	Dr. Jackson to check with Dr. Hartwig on status
02/25/99	Ms. Dutrow will distribute the ELAB recommendations to the proper committees or to the Board.	Completed
02/25/99	Ms. Batterton and Dr. Brokopp will write a solution to the issue of whether laboratories need another on-site inspection if they were inspected immediately before the state was granted accrediting authority.	Completed
02/25/99	Dr. Gary King will be asked to work on the issue paper for the Indian Tribes with Ms. Regelski.	On-going

List of Participants
Board of Directors/Committee Chairs Teleconference
April 2, 1999

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